



CARTER COURIER

<http://carter.house.gov>

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LETTER FROM THE CONGRESSMAN

Dear Friends,

Last week we learned great news regarding the economy when the Administration announced its year-end FY '06 budget numbers. The FY'06 budget deficit is \$248 billion -- which means that President Bush's promise to cut the deficit in half by 2009 has been met three years ahead of schedule. These numbers are further proof that Republican economic policies are working.

Unfortunately, we also received troubling news regarding nuclear weapons tests by North Korea. The actions of Kim Jong-il put the world at danger, and the international community must come together to address the ongoing nuclear ambitions of North Korea.

I applaud the U.N. Security Council for standing strong in its decision to impose sanctions against the North Korean government.

It is important that Congress support President Bush and our allies as they determine the best course of action in disarming North Korea. Kim Jong-il has repeatedly ignored calls to disarm, and we must defend ourselves against such criminal and defiant acts that threaten the globe. This news reaffirms the need for missile defense technologies in the U.S. as well as supporting other national security priorities.

Until next week,

CONG. CARTER HAILS STRONG ECONOMY JOBS, WAGES INCREASING

The U.S. economy is currently experiencing record strength and growth. Millions of new jobs and increased consumer spending are evidence of a prosperous economy. I am proud to be a part of the Republican-led Congress that has promoted a pro-growth agenda that is keeping more money in the hands of American workers. Our policies have helped create jobs, bolster the economy, and reduce the deficit.

Just last week, the U.S. Department of Labor (DOL) announced that 51,000 jobs were created in September for a total of more than 5.8 million new jobs since August 2003. The Department of Labor also announced that the unemployment rate fell to 4.6 percent and that average hourly earnings grew four percent over the last year, translating into significant wage growth for American workers.

The Department of Labor's report for September proves that pro-growth policies continue to work; helping create jobs, bolster the economy, and reduce the deficit. By alleviating tax increases, Americans are able to determine how best to spend their money, rather than leaving it to bureaucrats in Washington.

This DOL announcement marks 38 consecutive months of sustained job creation. The Department of Labor also reported that first-time claims for jobless benefits dropped 17,000 last week to 302,000, their lowest level since late July. Additionally, department stores reported an 8.4 percent increase in sales compared to

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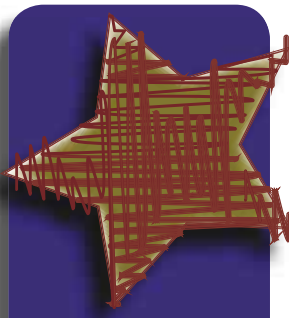
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last September.

Restraining federal spending is part of the equation to reduce the deficit and keep the economy strong. Over the past several years, we have encountered the demands of a war and devastating natural disasters has made fiscal restraint even more critical. Although we still have progress to make, we have begun to take aggressive steps to cut spending. In the Appropriations Committee, we have been successful in holding non-security spending to a two year freeze. We have also implemented reforms to entitlement program spending and the budget process.

Another key to keeping our economy strong is to fight tax increases. Millions of Texas taxpayers will benefit from tax relief policies: nearly 6.5 million Texans will benefit from the new, lower 10 percent tax bracket; more than 2.25 million married couples will receive an increase in the standard deduction for joint filers; and 1.65 million taxpayers will see a reduction in income tax rates.

It has been suggested by some that we eliminate such tax relief. Clearly, this would hinder families, as well as the economy. In fact, a family of four with two children making \$50,000 today will see its taxes increase by 132 percent if current tax relief policies are done away with. We must keep these important tax relief policies in place if we are going to remain prosperous.

Although our economy remains strong, many American families are concerned about rising health care costs, college tuition rates, and uncertainty about their retirement savings. Republicans have passed a number of initiatives to address these and other challenges to help lower the cost of living for individuals and families. I remain committed to seeing more individuals achieve the American Dream.

CARTER APPLAUDS SIGNING OF BILL TO SECURE NATION'S PORTS

Last week I was pleased that President Bush signed into law the Security and Accountability for Every (SAFE) Port Act. The President's signing of this bill came just days after I toured the Port of Houston and discussed homeland security and economic development issues with port authority and security executives.

The SAFE Act is a comprehensive measure that will help secure our nation's ports and prevent threats from reaching the United States. This law implements procedures to tighten security at our nation's ports, increase cargo security, and defend our nation from nuclear threats.

In a post-9/11 world, we must ensure that we continue to be vigilant in our homeland security efforts—at our ports, our borders, and our skies. The SAFE Port Act is critical to keeping our nation safe by securing our ports and stopping threats before they reach American soil. Our coastline is 12,000 miles, and our nation's ports handle approximately 11 million shipping containers each year. I commend President Bush for swiftly taking action to protect our nation's ports.

The legislation authorizes \$400 million per year for a Port Security Grant Program to help protect U.S. ports from terrorist attacks and improve their ability to respond in the event of such an attack. The SAFE Port Act requires 98 percent of inbound cargo containers to be scanned for radiation and requires guidelines to be established to govern such inspections. It also establishes three pilot programs to study the feasibility of screening 100 percent of cargo bound for the United States at foreign ports, rather than after its arrival in the United States. This legislation also contains provisions to strengthen our ability to detect nuclear and radiological terrorism.

CARTER VOTES TO PROTECT RELIGIOUS FREEDOM

Before adjourning for October, the House passed the Public Expression of Religion Act (PERA), which will allow Americans to defend the symbols and expressions of our nation's rich religious heritage. Specifically, HR 2679 would prevent groups from using the legal system to coerce state and local governments into removing references to religion in public places by prohibiting the award of monetary damages and/or attorneys' fees to prevailing parties in certain cases.

This bill is critical to ensuring that the right to freedom of religion is protected. Groups and individuals are manipulating current law in order to force state and local governments to remove constitutionally protected displays of religion and discriminate against groups with religious affiliations. Clearly this disgraceful practice is contrary to the intent of the First Amendment, which was to prevent government from penalizing people for their religious beliefs.

Supporters of PERA include: American Legion, Religious Freedom Coalition, Eagle Forum, Traditional Values Coalition, Concerned Women for America, American Civil Rights Union, Catholic League for Religious and Civil Rights, Prison Fellowship Ministries, Judicial Action Group, National Religious Broadcasters, and Advance USA.

I will continue to support initiatives that defend the constitutional right to religious expression.

HOUSE PASSES BILL TO REFORM NIH

I supported House passage of the National Institutes of Health Reform Act, which will implement common-sense reforms to enhance the federal government's ability to treat and cure diseases. Specifically, it will reauthorize and reform NIH, streamline its operations, and help accelerate breakthroughs in treatments and cures by creating a common fund to support research that involves multiple NIH agencies.

The bill authorizes a five percent annual increase in NIH's budget for fiscal years 2007 – 2009; launches a new, agency-wide electronic reporting system to catalogue all of the research activities of the NIH in a standard format; limits the overall size of the NIH to the current 27 institutes and centers; sets up a "common fund" to support particularly promising research that cuts across multiple institutes and centers; and creates a Scientific Management Review Group to evaluate NIH's structural organization at least once every seven years and propose any restructuring plans it deems necessary.

The NIH is critical to improving the health of our nation, and providing support and resources is important in order for it to continue to discover new medical treatments and cures.

COMMUNITY SERVICE NOTICE

DEADLINE FOR MILITARY ACADEMY CONGRESSIONAL APPLICATIONS IS OCTOBER 31, 2006

I want to remind students living in the 31st District who wish to receive a nomination to the United States Air Force Academy in Colorado Springs, CO; the United States Merchant Marine Academy in Kings Point, NY; the United States Military Academy in West Point, NY; or the United States Naval Academy in Annapolis, MD that the deadline for Congressional applications is October 31, 2006.

If you or someone you know is a high school senior or an individual up to the age of 22 interested in attending one of the U.S. military academies, you must have all materials for your Congressional application delivered to my Round Rock office by October 31st.

Also, please note that students must complete a separate application process with the academies themselves.

If you have additional questions regarding the military academy nomination process, I encourage you to contact the Academy Coordinator in my Round Rock office at 512-246-1600, or visit my website at <http://carter.house.gov>.

REMINDER: OCTOBER COMMUNITY OFFICE HOURS

Congressman Carter's *staff* will hold community office hours at the following time and location. The staff will be able to meet with residents to listen to their concerns and provide assistance with regard to federal issues and federal agencies.

TUESDAY, OCTOBER 24th

9:00 am - 11:00 am

Gatesville

Chamber of Commerce
Cotton Belt Depot
2307 Hwy. 36 South
Gatesville, Texas

TUESDAY, OCTOBER 24th

2:00 pm - 4:00 pm

Hamilton

Lee Conference Center
110 East Main Street
Hamilton, Texas

WEDNESDAY, OCTOBER 25th

9:00 am - 11:00 am

Dublin

Chamber of Commerce
108 South Patrick
Dublin, Texas

WEDNESDAY, OCTOBER 25th

10:30 am - 1:00 pm

Salado

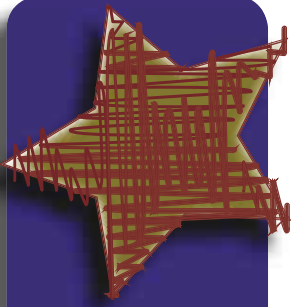
Community Center
601 North Main
Salado, Texas

WEDNESDAY, OCTOBER 25th

2:00 pm - 4:00 pm

Stephenville

City Hall
298 West Washington
Stephenville, Texas



Kids' Page

THE PRESIDENT'S CABINET PART II QUIZ

1. The U.S. Forest Service falls under:

Department of the Interior
Department of Agriculture
Department of Justice
Environmental Protection Agency
White House Photographer's Office

2. Which is not a Cabinet level agency?

DOD
OMB
ONDCP
USTR
OU812

3. Which Department does Secretary Carlos Gutierrez head?

Energy
Homeland Security
Justice
Commerce
State

4. Which agency was created in President Bush's Administration?

Department of Labor
United States Trade Representative
Department of Homeland Security
Department of Education
Department of Baseball

5. Who is this?

Secretary Snow
Secretary Norton
Secretary Leavitt
Secretary Spellings





Coloring Page: School Bus

OCTOBER 15-21 IS NATIONAL SCHOOL BUS SAFETY WEEK

This week is an excellent time for everyone--parents, students, teachers, motorists, school bus operators, school administrators, etc.--to join forces and address the importance of school bus safety.

For twenty three million students nationwide, the school day begins and ends with a trip on a school bus. It is very important that students use caution when getting on and off the bus.

